

# Supporting Document No. 6

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**SAN DIEGO'S ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY CALLS ON COUNTY  
SUPERVISORS TO CEASE 'DIRTY WATER' CAMPAIGN**

(San Diego) March 18, 2003 – San Diego's leading environmental organizations have joined together to demand that the County Board of Supervisors withdraw Assembly Bill 1517 (Plescia), proposed statewide legislation that would gut existing stormwater regulations. "It is unconscionable that our County government would on one hand claim to support tough pollution prevention measures, while simultaneously embarking on a stealth campaign to undermine the Clean Water Act," stated San Diego BayKeeper Executive Director Bruce Reznik. "Whoever was responsible for this bill must be held accountable."

The legislation, drafted by County staff, seeks to weaken authority to effectively regulate stormwater contamination, the largest source of pollution to California's waters. The bill is a direct response to San Diego's groundbreaking stormwater permit, adopted in February 2001, which regulates run-off pollution from the region's 18 cities, the County and Port District.

The introduction of AB 1517 came shortly after Superior Court Judge Wayne L. Peterson dismissed a developer-led lawsuit that sought to overturn the permit. BayKeeper and the Natural Resources Defense Council intervened in the litigation, joining the State Water Resources Control Board and the Attorney General's office to successfully defend the permit.

"This is another attempt to avoid responsibility for our growing stormwater pollution problem", added Jim Peugh of San Diego Audubon Society. "After The County had pushed to

delay the permit's adoption for six years, it is obvious that some Supervisors have chosen to fight at all costs rather than comply with more protective regulations."

San Diego BayKeeper also issued a Public Records Act (PRA) to determine whether actions taken on this legislation in closed session deliberations were legal, and whether litigation is needed to ensure appropriate public input. This request comes at a time when the County is already charged with Brown Act violations stemming from secret deals associated with redistricting.

"The County has mastered the art of covering its tracks," added Marco Gonzalez, Chairman of The Surfrider Foundation, San Diego Chapter. "We must ensure that nothing illegal was done. The people of San Diego have a right to know who at the County supported AB 1517."

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Since 1995, San Diego BayKeeper has been '*putting advocacy into action to protect San Diego's bays, beaches and watersheds*'. BayKeeper utilizes outreach, education and advocacy to increase awareness of environmental issues, promote policies that will protect our natural resources, and challenge those who violate environmental laws.

The San Diego Bay Council is an alliance of the region's leading water quality organizations. Member groups include **BayKeeper**, the San Diego chapters of **The Surfrider Foundation**, **Audubon Society** and **Sierra Club** and the **Environmental Health Coalition**.